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ON
NOBILITY:
AN
EPISTLE

TO THE
Right Hon^{ble}. the Earl of *****

-----*Sed Te censeo laude Tuorum*
Noluerim-----

JUV.

By Mr. WILLIAM WHITEHEAD,
Fellow of Clare-Hall, CAMBRIDGE.



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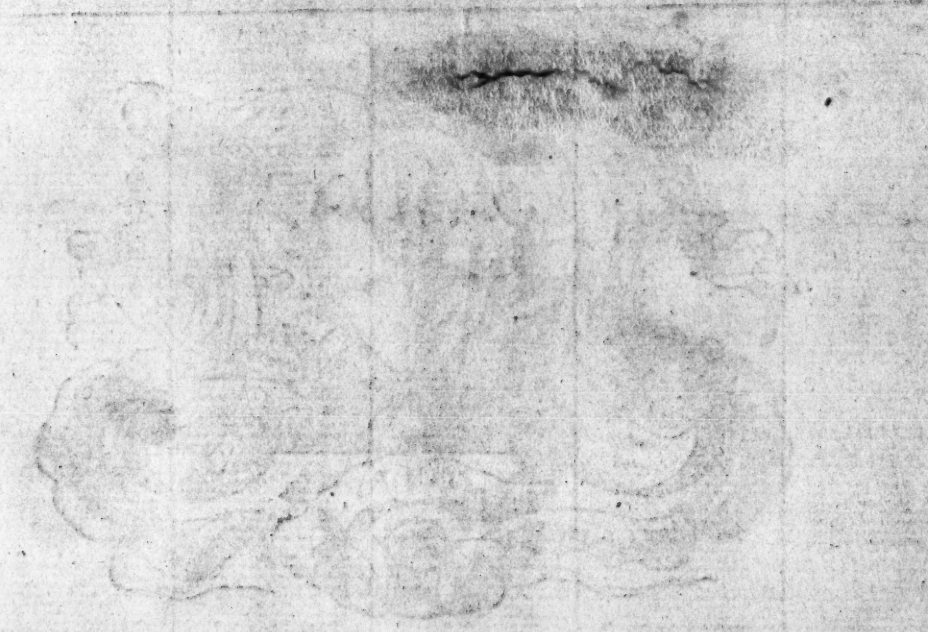
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 4. Alys and Adrastus.
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Would you be Great, — be Virtuous, and be Wise.

ON

In elder Times, of Histories yet were known

NOBILITY:

As Foes and Champions, Pale and Contagious;

AN

Thus He alone the flaggy Spoils might wear,

Who's Secret, the Lion, or the Bear;

EPISTLE.

Let Honours trip from every Grove and Field;

POETS, my LORD, by some unlucky Fate
Condemn'd to flatter the too easy Great,
Have oft, regardless of their Heav'n-born
Enshrin'd a Title, and ador'd a Name; Flame,
For Idol Deities forsook the True, 5
And paid to Greatness what was Virtue's Due.

Their Incense liv'd, and Charlemagne:

Yet hear, at least, one recreant Bard maintain
Their Incense fruitless, and your Honours vain:
Teach you to scorn th' auxiliar Props, that raise
The painted Produce of these Sun-shine Days; 10

Poets

B

Proud

Proud from yourself, like *India's* Worm, to weave
 Th' ennobling Thread, which Fortune cannot give.
 In two short Precepts your whole Lesson lies;
 Wou'd you be Great?— be Virtuous, and be Wise.

H O

In elder Time, e'er Heralds yet were known 15
 To gild the Vain with Glories not their own;
 Or infant Language saw such Terms prevail,
 As *Fests* and *Chev'ron*, *Pale* and *Contrepale*;
 'Twas He alone the shaggy Spoils might wear,
 Whose Strength subdued the Lion, or the Bear; 20
 For him the rosy Spring with Smiles beheld
 Her Honours stript from every Grove and Field;
 For him the rustic Quires with Songs advance;
 For him the Virgins form the annual Dance.
 Born to protect, like Gods they hail the Brave; 25
 And sure 'twas Godlike, to be born to save!

In *Turkey* still these simple Manners reign,
 Tho' *Pharamond* has liv'd, and *Charlemagne*:
 The Cottage Hind may there admitted rise
 A Chief, or Statesman, as his Talent lies; 30
 And all, but *Othman's* Race, the only Proud,
 Fall with their Sires, and mingle with the Croud.

Politer

Politer Courts, ingenious to extend/
 The Father's Virtues, bid his Roms descend;
 Chiefs premature with suasive Wreaths adorn, 35
 And force to Glory Heroes yet unborn,
 † Plac'd like *Hamilcar's* Son, their Path's confin'd,
 Forward they must, for Monsters press behind;
 Monsters more dire than *Spain's*, or *Barca's* Snakes,
 If Fame they grasp not, Infamy o'ertakes. 40
 'Tis the same Virtue's vigorous, just Effort
 Must grace alike *St. James's*, or the *Porte*;
 Alike, my LORD, must *Turk*, or *British* Peer,
 Be to his King, and to his Country dear;
 Alike must either Honour's Cause maintain, 45
 You to preserve a Fame, and They to gain.

For Birth --- precarious were that boasted Gem,
 Tho' Worth flow'd copious in the vital Stream:
 (Of which a sad Reverse Historians preach,
 And sage Experience proves the Truths they teach.) 50
 For say, ye Great, who boast another's Scars,
 And, like *Busiris*, end among the Stars,

Ver. 37. *Plac'd like Hamilcar's Son, &c.*] Ibi fama est, in quiete visum ab eo
Juvenoni divinâ specie, qui se ab Jove diceret ducem in Italiam Annibali
 missum. Proinde lequeretur, neque usquam à se deflecteret oculos. Pavidum
 primo, nusquam respicientem, &c. — Tandem, — temperare oculis nequivisse:
 cum visisset post se serpentem mirâ magnitudine cum ingenti arborum ac vir-
 gultorum strage ferri, &c. Liv. lib. xxi. c. 22.

What

What is this Boon of Heav'n? dependent still
 On Woman's Weakness, and on Woman's Will.
 Might not, in pagan Days, and open Air, 55
 Some wand'ring *Jove* surprize th'unguarded Fair?
 And did your gentle Grandames always prove
 Stern Rebels to the Charms of lawless Love?
 And never pitied, at some tender Time,
 A dying *Damian*, with'ring in his Prime? 60
 Or, more politely to their Vows untrue,
 Lov'd, and elop'd, as modern Ladies do?

But grant them virtuous, were they all of Birth?
 Did never Nobles mix with vulgar Earth,
 And City Maids to envied Heights translate, 65
 Subdued by Passion, and decay'd Estate?
 Or sigh, still humbler, to the passing Gales
 By turf-built Cots in daisy-painted Vales?
 Who does not, *Pamela*, thy Suff'rings feel?
 Who has not wept at beauteous *Grisel's* Wheel? 70
 And each fair Marchioness, that *Gallia* pours
 (Exotic Sorrows) to *Britannia's* Shores?

Ver. 60. *A dying Damian, &c.*] See *January* and *May* in *Chaucer* and *Mr. Pope*.

Ver. 71. *Each fair Marchioness, &c.*] *Marianne*, the *Fortunate Country Maid, &c.*

Then

And see those Hours, when Sleep their Toils repairs,
 (Then blame is not, if backward to comply
 With your Demands: We fear a Forgery.
 In spite of Patents, and of Kings Decrees,
 And blooming Coronets on Parchment-Trees,
 Your Proofs are gone, your very Claims are lost,
 But by the Manners of that Race you boast
 O if true Virtue fires their generous Blood,
 The Feel for Fame, the Pant for public Good,
 The kind Concern for Innocence distressed,
 The *Titus*'s Wish to make a People blest,
 At every Deed we see their Father's Tomb
 Shoot forth new Laurels in eternal Bloom;
 We hear the rattling Car, the neighing Steeds,
 A *Poitiers* Thunders, and a *Gressy* bleeds!
 Titles and Birth, like Diamonds from the Mine,
 Must by your Worth be polish'd ere they shine;
 Thence drink new Lustre, there unite their Rays,
 And stream thro' Ages one unfullied Blaze.

But what avails the Crest with Flow'rets crown'd,
 The Mother virtuous, or the Sires renown'd,
 If, from the breathing Walls, those Sires behold
 The midnight Gamester trembling for his Gold:

And see those Hours, when Sleep their Toils repair'd,
 (Or, if they wak'd, they wak'd for Britain's Guard,)
 Now on lewd Loves bestow'd, or drench'd in Wines
 Drown and embrate the Particle divine;
 How must they wish, with many a Sigh, unheard
 The warmest Prayer they once to Heav'n prefer'd ! 100
 When not content with Fame for Kingdoms won,
 They sought an added Boon, and ask'd a Son;
 That Cloud eternal in their Sky serene,
 That dull dead Weight that drags them down to Men,
 And speaks as plainly as the Muse's Tongue, 105
 " Frail were the Sires from whom we Mortals sprung."

Incense to such may breathe, but breathes in vain,
 The dusky Vapour but obscures the Fane :
 Loretto's Lady like, such Patrons bear
 The flatt'ring Stains of many a live-long Year ; 110
 Whilst but to shame them beams fictitious Day,
 And their own Filth th' Eternal Lamps betray.
 Tell us, ye Names, preserv'd from Charles's Times
 In Dedication Prose, Heroic Rhimes ;
 Wou'd ye not now, with equal Joy resign 115
 (Tho' taught to flow in Dryden's Strain divine)

The awkward Virtues never meant to fit,
 The alien Morals, and imputed Wit,
 Whose very Praise but had a fatal Breath
 To save expiring Infamy from Death? 120

And yet, in conqu'ring Vice small Virtue lies;
 The Weak can shun it, and the Vain despise.
 'Tis yours, my Lord, to form a nobler Aim,
 And build on active Merit solid Fame;
 Unlike the loitering, still forgotten Croud,
 Who, ev'n at best but negatively good,
 Thro' Sloth's dull Round drag out a Length of Days,
 While Life's dim Taper gradually decays;
 And Numbers fall, and Numbers rise the same, 125
 Their Country's Burthen, and their Nature's Shame.

What tho' in Youth, while flatt'ring Hopes presume
 On Health's vain Flourish for long Years to come,
 Thoughtless and gay, a mad Good-nature draws
 From Followers Flatt'ry, and from Crouds Applause;
 Nay from the Wise, by some capricious Whim, 135
 Shou'd, mix'd with Pity, force a faint Esteem:
 Yet will in Age that Siren charm prevail,
 When Cares grow peevish, and when Spirits fail?

Or

Or must, despis'd, each Foot of Fortune sigh;
 O'er Years mispent with retrospective Eye,
 Till Pomp's last Honours load the pageant Bier,
 And much Solemnity without a Tear?

'Tis yours with Judgment nobly to bestow,
 And treasure Joys the Bounteous only know.
 See, sav'd from Sloth by you, with venial Pride,
 Laborious *Heath* the stubborn Glebe divide;
 Instructed *Want* her folded Arms unbend,
 And smiling *Industry* the Loom attend.
 Yours too the Talk to spread indulgent Ease,
 Steal Cares from wrinkled Age, disarm Disease,
 Insulted Worth from proud Oppression screen,
 And give neglected Science where to lean.
 Titles, like Standard-Flags, exalted rise,
 To tell the Wretched where Protection lies;
 And he who hears unmov'd Affliction's Claim,
 Deserts his Duty, and denies his Name.
 Nor is't enough, tho' to no Bounds confin'd,
 Your Cares instruct, or Bounties bless Mankind.
 'Tis yours, my LORD, with various Skill to trace,
 By History's Clue, the Statesman's subtle Maze;

Observe

Observe the Springs, that mov'd each nice Machine,
 Not laid too open, and not drawn too thin ;
 From *Grecian* Mines bring sterling Treasures Home,
 And grace your *Britain* with the Spoils of *Rome*.
 But chief that *Britain's* gradual Rise behold, 165
 The changing World's Reverse, from Lead to Gold:
 Happy at last, thro' Storms in Freedom's Cause,
 Thro' fierce Prerogative, and trampled Laws,
 To blend such seeming inconsistent Things,
 As Strength with Ease, and Liberty with Kings. 170
 Know too, where *Europe's* wav'ring Fates depend,
 What States can injure, and what States defend,
 Their Strength, their Arts, their Policies your own—
 And then, like *PELHAM*, make that Wisdom known.
 Wake every latent Faculty of Soul, 175
 Teach from your Lips the glowing Sense to roll,
 Till list'ning Senates bless the kind Alarm,
 Convinc'd, not dazzled, and with Judgment warm.

Superior Talents, on the Great bestow'd,
 Are Heav'n's *peculiar* Instruments of Good : 180
 Not for the few, who have them, are design'd :
 What flows from Heav'n must flow for all Mankind.

D

Blush

Blush then, ye Peers, who, Niggards of your Store,
 Brood o'er the shining Heap, not make it more;
 Or *Wilmot* like, at some poor Fool's Expence,
 Squander in Wit the sacred Funds of Sense,
 Wisdom alone is true Ambition's aim,
 Wisdom the Source of Virtue, and of Fame,
 Obtain'd with Labour, for Mankind employ'd,
 And then, when most you share it, best enjoy'd.

See! on yon sea-girt Isle the Goddess stands,
 And calls her Vot'rys with applauding Hands!
 They pant, they strain, they glow thro' Climes unknown,
 With added Strength, and Spirits not their own.
 Hark! what loud Shouts each glad Arrival hail!
 How full Fame's Fragrance breathes in ev'ry Gale!
 How tempting nod the Groves forever green!
 —“ But Tempests roar, and Oceans roll between.”—
 Yet see, my Lord, your Friends around you brave
 That roaring Tempest, and contending Wave.
 See -----lab'ring thro' the Billowy Tide!
 See ----impatient for the adverse Side!
 O much-lov'd Youths! to *Britain* justly dear,
 Her Spring, and Promise of a fairer Year.

Success

Success be theirs, whate'er their Hopes engage, 205
 Worth grace their Youth, and Honours crown their Age,
 And every warmest Wish sincere, and free,
 My Soul e'er breathes, O ---, for thee!

Hard is your stated Task by all allow'd,
 And modern Greatness rarely bursts the Cloud. 210
 Lull'd high in Fortune's silken Lap, you feel
 No Shocks, nor Turns of her uncertain Wheel:
 Amusements dazzle, weak Admirers gaze,
 And Flatt'ry fooths, and Indolence betrays.
 Yet still, my LORD, on happy Peers attends 215
 That noblest Privilege, to chuse their Friends;
 The Wise, the Good are theirs, their Call obey;
 If Pride refuse not, Fortune points the Way.
 Nor great your Toils on Wisdom's Seas, compar'd
 With theirs who shift the Sail, or watch the Card. 220
 For you, the Sages every Depth explore,
 For you, the Slaves of Science ply the Oar;
 And Nature's Geni fly with Sails unfurl'd,
 The DRAKE's and RALPH's of the mental World.

But stay --- too long meer *English* Lays detain 225
 Your light-wing'd Thoughts, that rove beyond the Main:

No

No fancied Voyage there expects the Gale;
No allegoric Zephyr swells the Sail;
--- Yet, e'er you go, e'er *Gallia's* Pomp invades
The milder Truths of *Gratia's* peaceful Shades,
This Verse at least be yours, and boldly tell,
That if you fall, not unadvys'd you fell;
But, blest with Virtue and with Sense adorn'd,
A willing Victim of the Fools you scorn'd.

